

# Point of Origin

The community is where awareness begins

Summer 2007

## Lake Camelot Joins the Firewise Communities USA Program

On May 5th, 2005 the 3,410-acre Cottonville Fire burned in Adams county. One nearby community reacted to that fire by deciding they needed to do something to help lower their potential to lose everything should a wildfire move through their area. Working with DNR Forestry staff and the Town of Rome Fire Department, the Lake Camelot Property Owner's Association decided to enter into the

Firewise Communities USA Recognition Program. Under this program, a community works together, with the guidance of local fire officials, to collectively lower their wildfire ignition potential.

On March 13-14, 2006, Lake Camelot residents took an important step towards earning recognition status. That step included allowing DNR Forestry personnel and the Town of Rome Fire Department personnel to complete an assessment of their community. The assessment focused on issues of vegetation, access, and building materials and their relation to wildfire potential. Soon after, Lake Camelot residents formed a Firewise Board and created an



*Lake Camelot property owners reduce their wildfire risk by removing dead and down wood from commonly held properties.*

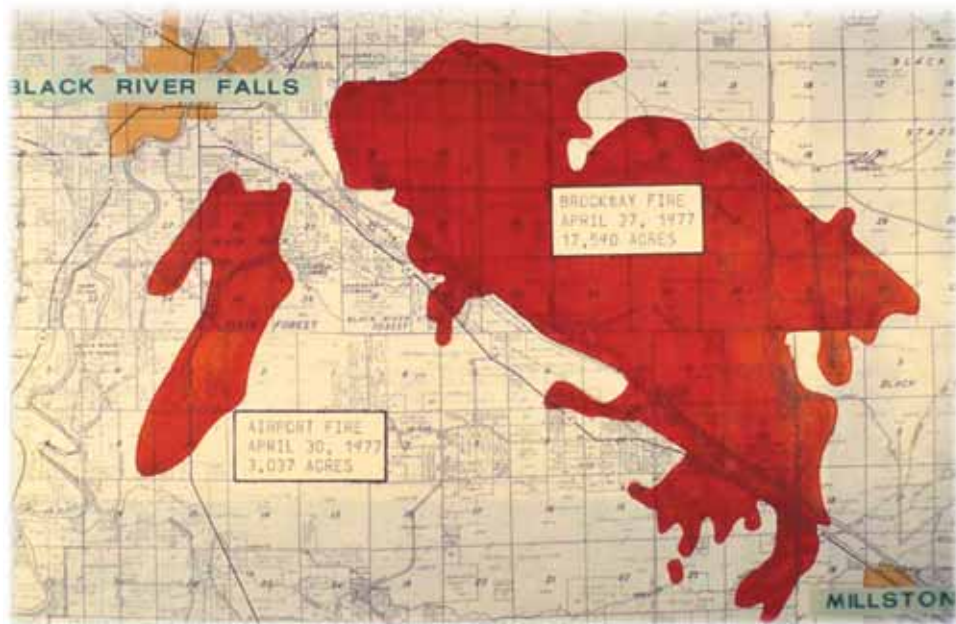
Action Plan that describes the work they will accomplish, based on the findings in the assessment. During the spring and summer months, residents organized chipping days to remove some of the dead wood from their common areas. Most recently, their Firewise Board was awarded funding through the DNR's Hazard Mitigation program to continue with chipping days throughout 2007 and into 2008. Lake Camelot residents can look forward to being officially presented with Firewise Communities USA recognition at an upcoming lake association meeting. Congratulations to residents of Lake Camelot and their proactive approach to lower wildfire danger in their neighborhood! 🔥

### From the Editors...

Our purpose is to provide you with information about the services, products, and direction of the Wisconsin DNR and the various partners in protection, referring specifically to wildfire prevention, suppression, and outreach. Building partnerships is the key to success!



# 1977 Spring Fire Season – The “Big Ones”



Map showing the proximity of the Airport and Brockway fires.

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of several significant wildfires in Wisconsin. Forest fire conditions in 1977 were the most severe the state had seen since 1936. The 1977 fire season started in the middle of March in the southern part of the state and by the last week in March, all areas in the state were reporting fires. The 1976 drought continued into 1977 until the middle of May when spring rains lowered the fire danger. The period from April 24 through May 7 was the worst for Wisconsin. Several large fires occurred in pine timber.

Fire burning through the tree tops and embers flying long distances was common. Many people involved in fire control were introduced to large fires burning in tree tops for the first time. By the end of 1977, the total number of fires reported in parts of the state where DNR is responsible for wildfire suppression (about half the state) were 1,861 fires, burning **48,806 acres**. In parts of the state where local fire departments are responsible for wildfire suppression, 2,062 fires were reported, burning just **over 17,000 acres**. 🔥

Fire Name	Brockway	Saratoga	Airport	Five Mile Tower	New Miner III
Size (acres)	17,590	6,159	3,037	13,375	1,551
Date	April 27, 1977	April 27, 1977	April 30, 1977	April 30, 1977	May 8, 1977
Counties	Jackson	Wood, Portage	Jackson	Douglas, Washburn	Juneau
Temperature	80	79	71	76	73
Humidity	19 %	24 %	28 %	23 %	23 %
Wind Direction	Southwest	Northwest	Southwest	South	Northwest
Wind Speed	16 mph	12 mph	10 mph	17 mph	10 mph
Cause	railroad	incendiary	chain saw	campfire	incendiary



# DNR Aeronautics Section Update

*John A. Jorgensen, DNR Aircraft Pilot*

The past year has been an active and productive one for the DNR Aeronautics Section. The section has been fully incorporated into the Division of Forestry, Bureau of Forest Protection and has worked hard to align itself to its evolving and changing role. At this time the section is pleased to report that it is fully staffed, all of the aircraft FM radios have been upgraded, the Aircraft Operations Manual has been rewritten and the second annual Air Attack training exercise has been conducted.

The Aeronautics Section is please to welcome three new full-time pilots to our group. They are Dan Cardinal in Rhinelander and Heath Van Handel and Luke Wuest in Oshkosh. The DNR aircraft are based in hangers around the state in relation to their fire-routes and to serve the needs of the regions. The aircraft are based at Oshkosh, Rhinelander, Siren, Eau Claire and Madison. At Oshkosh the aircraft pilots are Bob Clark, Heath Van Handel and Luke Wuest; at Rhinelander they are Mike Weinfurter and Dan Cardinal; at Siren they are Phil Miller, John Bronson and Joe Sprenger; at Eau Claire the aircraft pilot is Paul Anderson and in Madison the aircraft pilot is John Jorgensen. These full-time pilots are supported by a group of dedicated part-time pilots who fill-in and support the section as required.

For the 2007 fire season all of the aircraft FM radios have been upgraded to the Kenwood TK-690H. These radios have replaced the outdated King FM radios. Currently the section is working to secure a grant to purchase real aircraft multi-band radios. Additionally, the Department of Administration maintenance crew, led by Bob Clayman, is reworking the avionics stack in the Madison Cessna 180, N59DW, to provide a more useful and user-friendly communications tool. This new avionics arrangement will include (from top to bottom): Kenwood FM radio, Garmin 296 GPS, avionics audio panel, 2 aircraft communications/navigation radios and the aircraft transponder. Also, a portable collision avoidance system, Telex active noise-canceling headset and a landing/taxi pulse light kit is being installed. This layout will be done as an experiment and if successful it will be used as the prototype for further changes and upgrades for all of the DNR aircraft.



*2007 upgraded aircraft panel.*



*Air Attack Training, 11 January 2007, at the Black River Falls Service Center.*

*Front row (from left to right): Phil Miller, Paul Anderson, Joe Sprenger, Heath Van Handle, Jim Kress. Middle row: Mike Weinfurter, Larry Schlasinger, Bob Clark, Gary Lerch, John Jorgensen, Bob Pearson. Back row: Luke Wuest, John Bronson, Larry Wascow, Dan Cardinal, and Leo Bunderson.*

The Aircraft Operations Handbook has been rewritten and updated to reflect the many changes in the daily operation of the section. The biggest change is to incorporate the “Wildland Fire Fighting Standard Operating Procedures for Wisconsin Resource Pilots” into the manual. Other changes were rather small, mostly reflecting new staff, updated phone directory and manual code revision. Additionally, the FAA has revised our “Low Altitude Waiver” allowing for section low altitude operations and these changes have now been noted and where necessary, reflected in the Handbook.

The second annual Air Attack Training exercise was conducted January 9-11 in Black River Falls. This mandatory training session brought together all of the pilots to review the correct procedures involved in our three main fire-related roles: observation, initial attack and air-attack. Many scenarios and simulations were conducted exposing each pilot to a potential fire fighting problem. Phil Miller put this program together and, with the support of several personnel from Forest Protection, provided an interesting and challenging training opportunity.

In summary, the Aviation Section has been staffed, trained and equipment-upgraded in order to support and fulfill their mission to the best of their abilities. The pilots can be contacted using the following phone numbers: Oshkosh hanger at 920-424-1190, Rhinelander hanger at 715-365-2648, Siren hanger at 715-349-7580, Eau Claire hanger at 715-839-3737 and the Madison hanger at 608-246-5377. If the aircraft are flying they can be reached through the local DNR dispatch office. The pilots of the Aeronautics Section look forward to working with you, supporting your efforts on the ground and being “the best little aeronautics section that we can be!” 🌟

# The Fire-Prone Property Assessment

Jolene Ackerman, Wildland-Urban Interface Specialist, Madison

In Wisconsin, the greatest wildfire risk occurs after snow melt and lasts until full vegetation green-up, usually March through June. The checklist below is to help you determine which aspects of your property could be improved to help your home and other buildings become better able to withstand a wildfire. This list focuses on vegetation clean up and maintenance activities that can be easily accomplished in an afternoon.

Due to the unpredictable behavior of a wildfire, survivability cannot be guaranteed even with the most well maintained properties. It is, however, in your best interest to minimize the fire risks around your property. Research is showing that often time it's "the little things" that cause homes to ignite, such as vegetation growing next to foundations, flying embers that land in firewood stacks and rain gutters, or a drought-stricken lawn. Simple changes and a regular maintenance schedule can greatly increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire.

Keep in mind that local ordinances and covenants concerning shoreline property, driveway standards, vegetation, etc. may exist where you live. Check with your local water management specialist, local zoning administrator, and/or homeowner association to find out if ordinances or covenants exist where you live. 🔥



*Do your rain gutters look like this? Dry pine needles provide an ideal place for flying embers to land, smolder, and ignite, potentially starting your house on fire.*



*Firewise landscaping features next to buildings can be as simple as keeping a 3 to 5 foot "fuel free zone" by filling in the area with non-flammable stone and covering window wells to keep them from filling in with leaves and other easily ignitable materials.*

We in the Wisconsin DNR - Bureau of Forest Protection would like to extend an invitation to our fellow cooperators by soliciting information or topic ideas from our readers. If you have any ideas for the newsletter, contact:

Wisconsin DNR-  
Division of Forestry  
"The Point of Origin"  
P.O. Box 7921,  
Madison, WI  
53707-7921

608-266-2359 or  
608-267-7677

[pointoforigin@dnr.state.wi.us](mailto:pointoforigin@dnr.state.wi.us)

Visit our website for more information at:  
[www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fire/)

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**If you circle "NO" to any of these items, it is considered a wildfire hazard on your property.**

Are your roof and rain gutters clear of leaves and pine needles? .....	Yes	No
Are your decks, porches, and balconies clear of leaves, needles, and other flammable materials both on and under? .....	Yes	No
Are tree limbs trimmed back at least 10 feet from your roof? .....	Yes	No
Is the area 3 to 5 feet around all buildings kept clear of vegetation and debris? .....	Yes	No
Is your lawn kept short and raked free of leaf litter and other debris? .....	Yes	No
Are the trees and shrubs around your property mostly deciduous (leafed)?.....	Yes	No
Are your evergreens spaced so that limbs are at least 10 feet from other trees and shrubs? .....	Yes	No
Are tree branches 30 feet around buildings kept pruned up at least six feet from the ground? .....	Yes	No
Are your trees and shrubs kept free of dead wood? .....	Yes	No
Is your firewood stack at least 30 feet away from all buildings?.....	Yes	No
Do you compost your yard waste rather than burn it? .....	Yes	No

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# Chain Saw Safety Training Opportunities

Rachel Peterson, Manager of Training, Certification and Safety for FISTA

Located in Rhinelander, the Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA) is a nationally recognized, non-profit safety training and education organization for the forest industry. FISTA is most well known for its hands-on Chain Saw Safety Training Program, which has been conducted in hundreds of locations throughout Wisconsin and across the country. Chain Saw Safety Training is conducted for a wide variety of groups such as: loggers, foresters, landowners, highway departments, correctional facilities, conservation districts, municipalities, fire departments and many more. The Wisconsin DNR recognizes the importance and quality of the training FISTA provides and uses our trainers to train DNR personnel in the safe use of chainsaws for their field operations.

This article is being included in this publication because we believe your organization may benefit from the training we offer. You can find additional information on our website at [www.fistausa.org](http://www.fistausa.org). We are willing to set up training programs anywhere in the state to meet your needs and the safety and training of your employees and volunteers. Because our training focuses on safety and proper equipment use, many insurance companies recognize its value in helping to reduce job related accidents and injuries. Please take a moment to consider the value of chainsaw safety training for the work

you do in rural environments or the wildland/urban interface. If you agree your organization could utilize our training or you have additional questions, please contact one of our trainers: Lee Schauman at 715.336.2076, Jim Olive at 715.362.2040 or the FISTA Office Staff at 1.800.551.2656. We will be happy to tailor training to meet your needs.

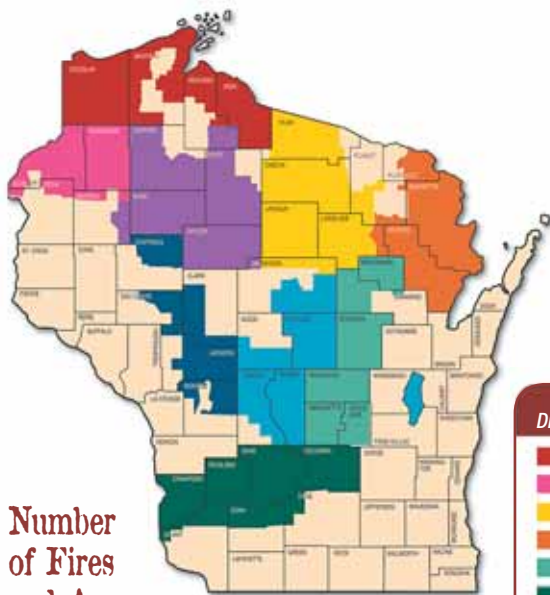
FISTA is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization governed by a nine-member board of directors. In business since 1991, FISTA is committed to providing quality training at a reasonable cost. FISTA provides safety training and education to workers in forestry-related industries to:

1. Decrease the number and severity of logging, chainsaw and tree care related accidents;
2. Improve productivity and professionalism; and
3. Encourage environmentally sound practices. 🔥



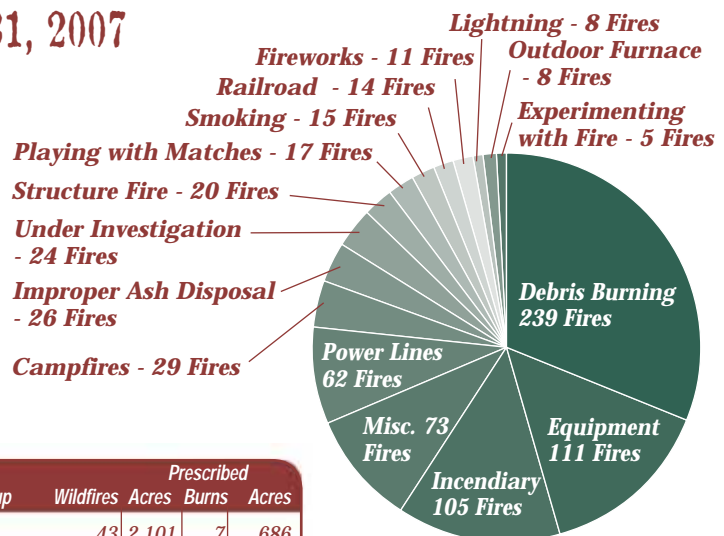
## 2007 Spring Fire Season at a Glance

Wildfire season statistics as of May 31, 2007



Number of Fires and Acres Burned by Dispatch Group

Dispatch Group	Wildfires	Prescribed		
		Acres	Burns	Acres
Brule	43	2,101	7	686
Cumberland	57	59	28	2,230
Woodruff	148	320	5	101
Peshtigo	83	268	5	251
Waupaca	75	140	46	2,215
Dodgeville	62	338	337	18,018
Wisconsin Rapids	97	115	4	246
Black River Falls	77	300	12	288
Park Falls	124	249	3	1,375
<b>Totals</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>3,889</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>25,410</b>
Cooperative Area				
County Boundary				



General Fire Causes on Lands Protected by DNR

## The Point of Origin

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

# Town of Riverview Plans for Wildfire

*Deanna Palek, Wildland-Urban Interface Specialist, Northeast Region*

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is taking shape for the Town of Riverview in Oconto County. This project has been a long time coming and has been encouraged by the local government and fire departments. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) began working with the Town on this CWPP in early February of 2007, their enthusiasm and support to work with the DNR and the USFS has helped the project to get off to a good start.

The most recent meeting in May was one of many yet to come. Present at the meeting were representatives from the Town of Riverview, local fire departments, DNR, USFS, and Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC). The main objective is that the CWPP is *the Town's plan* and they are the decision makers. Soon, more stakeholders and interested parties will be invited from

the community for ideas and input. With much attention paid to mitigation strategies, areas of high risk, methods of treatment and various priorities will be laid out as a community base map is established.

Recently, BLRPC has been working with the local government in the Riverview area on other planning projects; much of the information already gathered will be used in developing the CWPP. Roles and responsibilities have been decided, goals have been determined, and an outline for the plan has been created.

With a precedence being set by the Town of Riverview, it is hopeful that this project will encourage neighboring communities to follow suit and initiate a CWPP of their own. 🔥



Designed by L. Pohlod